

SYN. NO. _____

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS YAROSLAVSKY AND MOLINA

December 20, 2005

Almost a year ago the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Office and appropriate Departments to ensure that discharge policies are in place and implemented to prevent persons leaving County institutions or systems of care from immediately becoming homeless. In response to this direction, the CAO and Departments have been reviewing current discharge policies, procedures, and practices and developing recommendations for connecting persons leaving County programs and facilities with appropriate housing and services upon discharge. The following Departments/Agencies have been engaged in this effort: Sheriff, Children and Family Services (DCFS), Health (DHS), Mental Health (DMH), Public Social Services (DPSS), Community Development Commission (CDC), and Military and Veterans Affairs.

Chronically homeless persons who live on Skid Row and move in and out of the County jail, generally for non-violent offenses related to their mental health and substance abuse issues, were a prime focus for the Departments in addressing discharge policies and practices. The Departments have proposed the following set of recommendations to strategically address this chronically homeless population:

- Create regional stabilization centers to serve persons discharged from County jail with no identified place to go, and to provide an alternative to jail for law

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enforcement who arrest a homeless person with mental illness and/or substance abuse for a minor offense. Mental health, substance abuse, social service, and economic support services would be provided at the stabilization centers by teams of experts. Additionally, each person served through the stabilization centers would be connected with appropriate supportive housing prior to leaving the centers.

- Create homeless courts, in partnership with the Superior Court, that are co-located at the stabilization centers. The purpose of the homeless courts is to quickly divert homeless persons with mental illness and/or substance abuse issues who are arrested for minor offenses away from jail and into appropriate treatment and housing.
- Create a housing data base and a cadre of expert housing locators to work with County departments to provide information on, and assist in securing, appropriate housing for persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Implement a pilot program to provide General Relief housing subsidies and case management services to certain homeless General Relief participants which would enable them to afford rental payments and to access critical employment and supportive services.
- Expand the DPSS Twin Towers General Relief program whereby DPSS staff take GR applications for certain inmates pending imminent release. DPSS proposes to expand the program to the Central Jail, include other benefit programs such as food stamps, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal, and provide application assistance to all inmates who are likely to be homeless upon release.
- Implement a pilot program at two or more DHS hospitals in which DPSS staff

take applications for CalWORKs, Food Stamps, Medi-Cal, and General Relief from patients who are likely to be homeless upon discharge from the hospital.

The CAO and participating Departments are compiling information on the estimated cost for this set of discharge policy recommendations and creating an implementation timeline. In order to complete this important work, staff needs the input and cooperation of the District Attorney's Office and the Superior Court. Additionally, it is critical that the CAO and Departments submit the finalized recommendations to the Board of Supervisors as soon as possible so that the Board can make the necessary policy and funding decisions to address the needs of the chronically homeless population.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Conceptually endorse the discharge policy recommendations as outlined above which were prepared by the CAO in collaboration with appropriate Departments to respond to the needs of the chronically homeless population;
2. Send a five signature letter to the Superior Court and the District Attorney requesting that they join our Board and the Sheriff in supporting these recommendations and to immediately appoint representatives to work with County staff in finalizing the implementation plans and cost estimates; and
3. Direct the CAO, Sheriff, the Directors of the Departments of Public Social Services, Mental Health, Health, Children and Family Services and Military and Veteran Affairs, and the Executive Director of the Community Development Commission to submit their final recommendations including cost estimates and an implementation plan to the Board for consideration no later than February 28, 2006.